

(12) PATENT
(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

(11) Application No. AU 199748484 B2
(10) Patent No. 725692

(54) Title
Gaming machine

(51)⁷ International Patent Classification(s)
G07F 017/34

(21) Application No: **199748484**

(22) Application Date: **1997.12.18**

(30) Priority Data

(31) Number
PO4562

(32) Date
1997.01.10

(33) Country
AU

(43) Publication Date : **1998.07.16**

(43) Publication Journal Date : **1998.07.16**

(44) Accepted Journal Date : **2000.10.19**

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(56) Related Art
DE 29608148U
DE 19542625

ABSTRACT

A gaming machine includes a display means, and a game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means. The game control means is arranged to play a game in which a plurality of indicia are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination of indicia occurs, the machine pays a prize. The game is characterised in that upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, the screen display changes to display a matrix of trumpet symbols, which are selectable by a player of the machine, and if the player selects a particular symbol, a tune is played and the machine pays a prize. In a variation a series of musicians are displayed on the display screen and if two identical musicians are displayed and play the same tune, a prize is paid.



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ORIGINAL

**COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
STANDARD PATENT**

Invention Title:

Gaming machine

The following statement is a full description of this invention including the best method of performing it known to us:-

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to gaming machines of the type generally referred to as slot machines, fruit machines, or poker machines, and in particular the invention provides a game to be played on such a machine.

Description of the prior art

Players who regularly play gaming machines, quickly tire of particular games and it is therefore necessary for manufacturers of gaming machines to come up with either innovative game features that add interest to the games provided on such machines, or provide new games in order to keep the players amused and willing to continue playing gaming machines.

Recently, the gaming machine market has experienced considerable growth and there is intense competition between manufacturers of gaming machines to supply the various existing and new venues. Clearly the revenue raised by an operator of a particular venue depends on the amount of money wagered. The amount of money wagered on a particular machine is related to the popularity of the machine. Thus when selecting a supplier of gaming machines, the operator of venue often pays close attention to the popularity of the various games with their patrons.

Therefore, gaming machine manufacturers are keen to devise games which are popular with players, as a mechanism for improving sales.

In particular, manufacturers regularly devise new games or game features which have not previously been seen on slot machines, in order to stimulate renewal of player interest.

The two most popular types of gaming machine either offer card games, particularly poker and variations of that game, or are machines of the traditional, and somewhat confusingly named, poker machine style (also known as fruit machines) in which the display means comprises a set of rotatable reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols, or a video simulation thereof. The present invention seeks to provide a game features which are suitable for use with either a traditional poker style gaming machine or a gaming machine playing a card game, and which add to player interest in the game.

Summary of the Invention

In its broadest aspect the present invention utilises sound and in particular the playing of particular tunes to add interest and another dimension to a game for a gaming machine.

5 In a first aspect, the present invention consists of a gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of indicia are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination of indicia
10 occurs, the machine pays a prize, the game being characterised in that upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, the screen display changes to display a matrix of symbols, which symbols are selectable by a player of the machine, and if the player selects a particular symbol, a tune is played and the machine pays a prize.

15 In a preferred embodiment, one of the indicia available for display on the screen is a musical instrument, such as a trumpet, and the predetermined triggering event is the occurrence of a number of such symbols on a pay line, whereupon the screen display change to show a number of musician symbols, and if the player selects the correct musician symbol, a simulation
20 of a trumpet tune is played.

In a second aspect, the present invention consists of a gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of indicia are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination occurs,
25 the machine pays a prize, the game being characterised in that one of the indicia displayed on the display means is a symbol associated with music, and on the occurrence of each such symbol in a predetermined location on the display means, the machine plays a tune, different symbols being
30 associated with the playing of particular tunes, and if the same tune is played twice, the machine pays a prize.

In a typical embodiment, the symbol is a musician.

35 In an alternative embodiment the symbol is a trumpet. If the appearance of, say, three trumpets is accompanied by a trumpet sound, a bonus is paid as well as the prize.

In one embodiment all the symbols may be visually identical. In an alternative embodiment, several variations in the appearance of musician symbols are provided, with visually identical musicians playing the same tune.

5 Thus the present invention provides games where players either have to find a tune or match tunes, thus providing added interest to the game by adding an audible aspect to the game, in which the occurrence of particular sounds or tunes does not merely confirm a loss or win for a player or acknowledge the pressing of a button, but determines whether or not a particular prize or an additional prize is to be paid.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Specific embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

15 Figure 1 illustrates a gaming machine having a video simulation of a rotating reel display incorporating a game embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 illustrates a first screen display for the gaming machine of Figure 1 playing a game embodying a first aspect of the invention;

20 Figure 3 illustrates a second screen display for the gaming machine of Figure 1 playing a game embodying the first aspect of the invention; and

Figure 4 illustrates a first screen display for the gaming machine of Figure 1 playing a game embodying a second aspect of the invention;

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

25 In the following detailed description, the methodology of the embodiments will be described, and it is to be understood that it is within the capabilities of the non-inventive worker in the art to introduce the methodology on any standard microprocessor-based gaming machine by means of appropriate programming.

30 Referring to Figure 1 of the drawings, the first embodiment of the invention is illustrated in which a slot machine 10 of the type having a video display screen 20 which displays a plurality of rotatable reels 22 carrying symbols of which one, 24, is illustrated, is arranged to pay a prize on the occurrence of a predetermined symbol or combination of symbols.

35 In the slot machine 10 illustrated in Figure 1, the game is initiated by a push button. 26, however it will be recognised by persons skilled in the art that this operating mechanism might be replaced by a pull handle or other

type of actuator such as a touch screen "button", in other embodiments of the invention. The top box on top of the slot machine 10 carries the artwork panel 28 which displays the various winning combinations for which a prize is paid on the machine.

5 The poker game played on the machine is a relatively standard poker game which includes a three by five symbol display and allows multiple pay lines.

10 One of the symbols which is present on the "reels" of the gaming machine is a trumpet, indicated in the drawings by the letter "T". Other symbols present on the reels include the following:-

King - K

Queen - Q

Lemon - L

Bell - B

15 Orange - O

Jack - J

Other symbols may also be present, the above are merely an explanation of the symbols appearing in Figure 2.

20 If five trumpets appear on a pay line, as illustrated in Figure 2, where five trumpets have appeared on the centre pay line 1, the screen changes to show five musicians, schematically illustrated in Figure 3 at 40, 42, 44, 46, and 48.

25 The player then selects one of the musicians by, for example, touching a particular musician in the case of a touch screen type gaming machine. If the choice made by the player is a winning choice, the musician plays a tune and a prize is awarded to the player.

30 An additional feature which may or may not be used with the feature described above is that on the occurrence of a winning pattern of trumpets, which may be three or more trumpets, if a trumpet sound is played, a bonus is paid.

35 Figure 4 illustrates a second embodiment of the present invention in which the machine plays a tune any time a musician 50 indicated by the symbol M appears on a pay line. For example if the player playing the screen shown in figure 4 is playing all three lines, musicians occur on all three pay lines, twice on line 3. A tune is played for each musician M, and if two of the four musicians play the same tune, then the machine pays a prize.

This second embodiment of the present invention could also be implemented on a traditional style of poker machine, having physical reels controlled by stepper motors. This is particularly advantageous since it is usually quite difficult to add game features to such machines, compared to the more versatile machines employing video display means.

5 The feature of the first embodiment is also suitable of implementation on a gaming machine playing a card game, although the trigger for the five musicians appearing would be different, for example an ACE as a first card in a hand and a club as the last card.

10 It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A gaming machine having a display means, and a game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of indicia are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination of indicia occurs, the machine pays a prize, the game being characterised in that upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, the screen display changes to display a matrix of symbols, which symbols are selectable by a player of the machine, and if the player selects a particular symbol, a tune is played and the machine pays a prize.
2. A gaming machine as claimed in claim 1 wherein one of the indicia available for display on the screen is a musical instrument and the predetermined triggering event is the occurrence of a number of such symbols on a pay line, whereupon the screen display change to show a number of musician symbols, and if, the player selects the correct musician symbol, a tune is played.
3. A gaming machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the musical instruments are trumpets and wherein if the appearance of a plurality of trumpets on the display means is accompanied by a simulation of a trumpet sound, a bonus is paid as well as the prize.
4. A gaming machine having a display means, and a game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of indicia are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination occurs, the machine pays a prize, the game being characterised in that at least one of the indicia displayed on the display means is a symbol associated with music, and on the occurrence of each such symbol in a predetermined location on the display means, the machine plays a tune, different symbols being associated with the playing of particular tunes, and wherein if the same tune is played twice by the game control means, the machine pays a prize.
5. A gaming machine as claimed in claim 4 wherein the gaming machine includes physical reels controlled by stepper motors, or the like, and the symbols are defined on the reels of the gaming machine.
6. A gaming machine as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, wherein the symbol associated with music is a musician symbol.



7. A gaming machine as claimed in claim 6, wherein several variations in the appearance of the musician symbols are provided on the display means, with visually identical musicians playing the same tune.
- 8 A gaming machine as claimed in any preceding claim and substantially
- 5 as hereinbefore described with reference to and/or as shown in Figures 2 and 3, or Figure 4 of the drawings.

Dated this fifteenth day of August 2000

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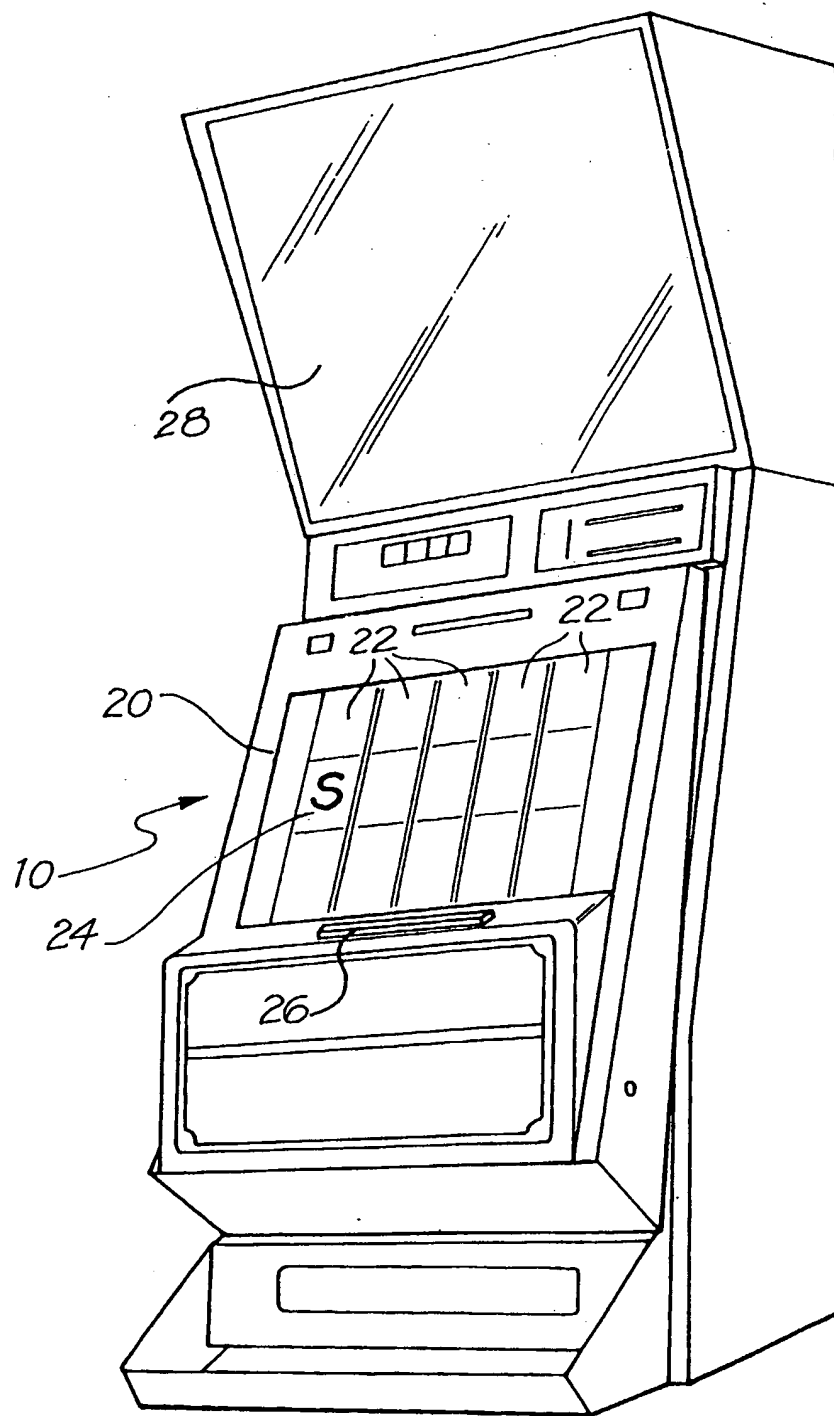


FIG. 1

